



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

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Shana Jones, Special Assistant
Daryl Fields, Public Information Officer
(210) 384-7452

January 10, 2007

**STATEMENT OF U. S. ATTORNEY JOHNNY SUTTON TO ALLEGATIONS OF
WRONGFUL PROSECUTION OF BORDER PATROL AGENTS COMPEAN AND RAMOS**

In response to the allegation that these agents were prosecuted for just doing their job, nothing could be further from the truth. These agents shot someone who they knew to be unarmed and running away. They destroyed evidence, covered up a crime scene and then filed false reports about what happened. It is shocking that there are people who believe it is okay for agents to shoot an unarmed suspect who is running away.

The law recognizes that agents will make mistakes and the government takes responsibility for good faith mistakes made in the line of duty. But no agent is given license to willfully shoot an unarmed, fleeing suspect in the back simply because the job is difficult, dangerous or important. My job and that of federal prosecutors is to enforce the laws the best we can. If law enforcement officers break the law, they have to face the consequences just as anyone else.

Agents Compean and Ramos were unanimously found guilty by a jury in a United States Federal District Court after a trial that lasted more than two and a half weeks. Both agents told their stories from the witness stand and had full opportunities to explain their version of events and to offer their own evidence. The jury heard everything including their claims of self defense. The jury did not believe their stories because they were not true.

In this case, the evidence showed that around 1:00 p.m.(not in the middle of the night) Aldrete , the Mexican alien, initially ran from the agents, but attempted to surrender with his empty hands raised over his head after Agent Compean pointed his shotgun at him. When Agent Compean tried to push Aldrete to the ground with the butt of his shotgun Agent Compean tripped and fell. Aldrete then took off running again toward the Rio Grande River and Mexico. Compean chased Aldrete firing at him with his pistol fourteen times, pausing once to reload and then shoot some more. Agent Ramos shot once and struck Aldrete in the buttocks. Neither agent made any further effort to apprehend him. After the shooting, they lied to their supervisors about the shooting, picked up and threw away the fired shell casings and filed a false investigative report leaving out any mention of the confrontation with Aldrete.

If Compean and Ramos truly believed Aldrete was a threat, why did they abandon him after shooting him? And if they truly believed the shooting was justified, why did they not report it, leave the scene undisturbed, and let the investigation absolve them? The answers to these questions are simple. The agents knew that Aldrete did not pose a threat as he fled, they knew the shooting was unjustified and unlawful, and they knew an investigation would incriminate them. So they chose to cover up their crimes. In America, law enforcement officers do not get to shoot unarmed suspects who are running away, lie about it to their supervisors and file official reports that are false. That is a crime and prosecutors cannot look the other way.

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